

# The Onward Sweep of Woman's Suffrage

By Mrs. Fannie May Barbee Hughs.

That suffrage is a natural right is the claim advanced for woman's suffrage and that women are in need of the vote to adequately protect her interests are reasons urged for demanding the right. This agitation has resulted in the enfranchisement in elections involving property taxes and schools in about half the States. In four States, namely, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming and Idaho, women possess suffrage on equal terms with men. In seventeen States they are permitted to vote on school matters. In Kansas they vote in municipal elections; Montana and Iowa permit them to vote on the issuance of municipal bonds. Women taxpayers vote in Louisiana in all matters concerning the expenditure of public money, and Texas grants them the right to hold office, giving a full or partial franchise in twenty-seven States. Extension of the elective franchise is granted to be a work of evolution, and Mrs. W. H. Phillips declares this conviction becomes stronger each day as men and women consider the agitation of the woman suffrage amendment. It is a long step, counted in years, since the first woman's rights convention was held, when women began to base their claims for equal rights on the Declaration of Independence, and when they began to memorialize the legislatures and congress, and there have been many illustrious names added to those of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Virginia L. Minor, Matilda Jocelyn Gage, Julia Ward Howe, Carrie C. Catt and Alma H. Shaw, chief among whom have been evolved from the colleges and universities. While the movement had its inception in the East, it is to the West we must look to see it in successful operation. Here a new era in politics has dawned and it's only a question of time, so say many of the shrewdest politicians on the Pacific coast, that it will be the case throughout the United States as a whole, for if California, Oregon, Nevada and Kansas give women the right to vote when the amendment is submitted other States will not be slow to follow suit. As they begin to realize that a multiplied vote means an advantage in representation in congress and that legislation for the favor of innovations are more easily secured from that body, for women voters, organized or unorganized, are sure to make people sit up and take notice, other States will turn to them for relief.

Whether one believes in suffrage or not, they are bound to admit that in the West at least the very best element of men and women are publicly fighting for it; the same people who are fighting "ring politics" are boosting woman's suffrage, which in itself makes it a live wire and vital issue. Further statistics prove that, whether suffrage is right or wrong, women take what they believe to be the honest course in their campaigns and put to shame many an experienced politician. After careful investigation it is safe to assert emphatically that women on a whole vote according to their own convictions and that they will insist upon clean government.

A glance at a few of the laws in operation in States that have equal suffrage, and a day spent in Judge Ben Lindsay's juvenile court at Denver are sufficient convincing reasons for declaring that woman's suffrage is an unqualified success. Many of the laws were not only agitated by the women, but through their united efforts were placed on the statute books, and these too through moral reasons and not party politics. Instances upon instances can be cited where democratic and republican women sacrificed party interest for that of principle, voting for the individuals who they knew to be clean and honest men—small wonder that the chair has been made that you can't place a woman's vote!

The women have learned in their own school, the federated club, the fundamental principles of good government and through studying these have learned to apply them to their own needs and those of their children. When it is recalled that it was

through the women's vote alone that Judge Lindsay was retained in office and the abolishment of the juvenile court made impossible, one involuntarily raises his hand to take off his hat to the cause of woman suffrage. In this instance it was the mother with her natural instinct to protect her offspring that actuated them to rise up in the majesty of their womanhood and cast their vote for the man who had been the friend to friendless children. One day spent in this court, where all conditions of crime are dealt with and justice meted out to the child offender, is a revelation to the seeker after truth. To many the crimes perpetrated by children would seem impossible of conception and only a big brain, a big heart and a woman's instinct are capable of dealing with them in all of their hideousness. The boys' cases come before Judge Lindsay, those of the girls before Miss Nellie D. Oswald. Mrs. Ida L. Gregory is clerk of the court, with a number of other women holding the office of deputy and complaint clerk, each a fair and woman wielding the scepter of justice with grace, intelligence and in the cause of right with as much ease and as methodically as she graces a mansion or presides over the household. No woman has done more for her sex than has Miss Oswald. She goes to the bottom of the crime committed in Denver against womanhood and in getting at the bottom of present unhealthy social conditions she not only possibly saves one individual, but by her careful analysis is building up a barrier that in time will be well nigh impregnable.

Since the news was flashed throughout the country that woman suffrage was a failure in Colorado, the anti's have taken heart and are renewing their attacks with greater vim and zeal. Among the various reasons given for opposing women voting these are common: Women can not be induced to use their right to vote; they like voting so well they neglect their homes, they vote like sheep, that they would not vote with their parties, and, last but by far most convincing reason for opposition, they sell their vote to the highest bidder, therefore it must be a failure.

The desire of Western people to rule themselves has been so great within the last year that many legislatures have been called upon to consider the initiative, referendum and recall, and one of the strongest arguments put forth by the anti-suffrage workers is that women are in favor of these measures and that the movement has no place in the republican government, and base their arguments upon what they term the records of Washington women, who, to use another's expression, "fattered the Seattle recall bill." With inborn Southern prejudice against women participating in elections I was prepared to find even greater flaws and more direful consequences attending the evil than were set forth by the press, but imagine my surprise when, upon summing up a two months' investigation in Colorado, Utah and California, where I not only met and talked with the political leaders of both factions, but attended rallies and talked with many of the common hearted women voters, I found that practically every prominent man interviewed, notwithstanding they granted that many of the claims set forth were in a measure true, people are not voting against the cause of women, that not all the women are of the highest character and that there do exist women paid workers as there do exist men, and that this should not be counted against the cause, but that men, against men, and expressed themselves in favor of extending the ballot; and after finding this idea prevalent among thinking men, I was brought back to the old question, there is a decided onward sweep of woman suffrage at least among leaders. How the masses regard it can only be determined by the ballot. Another argument that has been brought against the cause is the defeat of prohibition by the women voters of Denver. To such criticism they reply that they could not afford to support the temperance cause, inasmuch as the temperance issue, proving at least they have courage to express their conviction.

Two phases of the logic of our times will tell you that the argument against the amendment rests largely on prejudice and false sentiment, and leaders for the cause of equal suffrage are attempting to show the misguided the error by using arguments advanced by National leaders who have studied the times and conditions and who declare that women are as interested in legislation as men, and are entitled to representation; that those who are ruled by the law should at least have a say in what should be the laws and who the lawmakers. Perhaps no man in public life has given more thought to all phases of woman suffrage than Judge Louis W. Cunningham, and it may be interesting to many to know his convictions expressed in a personal interview at his office. He said: "It is not expected that women will be able to do in ten years what men have failed to do through all the ages, viz., throw off blind party bondage. I fought for woman suffrage in Colorado City on the theory that women had the inalienable right to the ballot. I do not agree with those who contend that the right to the ballot is a privilege. Legally this may be technically correct, but it has always been true that some of the worst offenses against society and against individual liberty have been able to plead some ill advised statute as justification. Law, like life, is subject to the immutable principles of evolution." Continuing in his defense of woman suffrage, he said: "Notwithstanding that there have been some disappointing results, had I known this I still would have voted and worked for the measure. I know now that the women are not now powerless; they can be appealed to. They ought to and will realize the duties imposed upon them by this grant of power. I know standing with ballots in their hand they are a constant warning to the men who now completely dominate the caucus, the primary and the convention not to become too shameless." Mr. Cunningham, continuing the conversation, recited numerous instances where the saloon man and his interests had been obliterated in his own town, and asserted before women had the right to vote conditions in his town were shocking. Dance halls of the very lowest type were permitted to do business; these have disappeared. Summing up the good that woman suffrage had accomplished, he said first, it had compelled men to think twice of woman's rights where he thought of her not at all; second, it compelled women to read and investigate for herself.

Another fallacy, that women vote according to the dictates of their husbands, has been exploded, if we accept the opinion of such an eminent authority as the mayor of Colorado Springs, H. F. Avery. He says that such is not the case—that women, like men, have their political faith inherent, just as they do their religion, or, in other words, nine cases out of ten women join political parties with which their fathers are affiliated.

Probably after all has been said the thing that is carrying woman suffrage onward is what women themselves are doing who have had the ballot bestowed upon them. Take Colorado again, for instance, for what the Mormon women are doing with their ballot will fill another volume, there is absolutely no force that has accomplished more for efficient, honest government than Dr. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, commissioner of Denver county. Her exposures of graft are familiar to all citizens; her efforts are on all tongues and newspapers lay tribute at her feet. Even her enemies admit she is influenced alone by what she considers to be morally right. Mrs. Helen Penfold, former State superintendent of schools; Mrs. Helen Wilson, present superintendent of public instruction; Mrs. Ana Wolcott, elected regent of the State university; the Hon. Louise U. Jones, Hon. Louise Kerwin, Hon. Agnes Riddle, Hon. Alma Lafferty, members of the State legislature and Susan Pitt Decker have not only been among the powers who have made State history, but are the leading women who are making the cause of suffrage one to be admired. Many of these are not only prominent in politics, but outside of political activity, like their male political workers, have shown marked ability in the business world. Some are democrats, others republicans. It is to Mrs. Agnes Riddle that a large number of both women and men suffrage workers refer to with pride as the best exponent of suffrage. Mrs. Riddle is the wife of a farmer and an attorney, though a republican, it was by the vote

of the farmers of three counties she was sent to represent them in the hall of the legislature. It is said of her that no man in the legislature does more work, yet without her home duties are never neglected. She has six adopted children, rises before sunrise, cooks breakfast, serves it and gets the children off to school and reaches the assembly hall before the house is called to order. She is working for a larger appropriation for the agricultural college and more money for rural schools. It is to such women that the thinking world is turning to find out what suffrage is accomplishing, and not to those who have done nothing to help humanity any more than they are turning to the workers you would look to the world's progress. If you were figuring on the earning capacity of your apixar, you would not be foolish enough to investigate the drones, but it would be to the workers you would look to solve the problem, and so it is in the political arena of Colorado, it is the workers with whom political bosses are finding that they will have to reckon.

What women have done in States where suffrage is granted they will attempt to do in other States. Throughout the summer campaigns have been in full swing in numerous States for the amendment. Particular interest, however, is centered in California, as that State will be first to vote on the amendment, and here they are more sanguine of success; then, too, its action will affect materially that of other States. Here "votes for women" are the words flying high in the breeze from many a talker, with the injunction in every daily paper:

"Women must work for votes of men. Let women mark these two dates on her calendar: Monday, September 3, last day to register; Tuesday, October 10, amendment election day. It should be the conscientious, patriotic duty of every woman who respects herself and would make the world a better place to see to it that the men of her family, her men friends and her neighbors are enrolled on the register before the day of the amendment. Let every woman vote for woman suffrage on the second."

### "Men Must Vote That Women May Vote."

Here the women are showing wisdom in the methods of their campaign and making converts daily at the noon, afternoon and evening rallies, which the opposition call "pink teas," and whether the amendment carries or not the women are convincing a thinking world by their logic and forceful speakers, who have been in the field throughout the summer, that there is justice in their demands for the ballot. Should the amendment be lost in California they will keep up the fight with as much vim in other States, Nevada and Kansas, where the amendment will be submitted in 1912, will then be the battleground.

The most discouraging element, I am told by suffrage workers, is to be found in the women themselves; their lethargy is harder to combat than is prejudice or opposition, and in the California campaign hours to house canvasses are being made and by direct contact of mind women are being aroused. With the flood-gate of thought left open many practical reasons for demanding the ballot find lodgment and are later passed on to their husbands. In the daily meetings held on the public thoroughfares, where many are attracted through idle curiosity, such good arguments are being advanced that many become converts. Suffrage speakers from all over America have been giving their time to the cause and the National association has given liberally of funds to promote the work in cities, towns and villages. The Hon. Alma Lafferty, member of the house of representatives of Colorado, filled numerous engagements. Miss Helen Todd, factory inspector from Chicago, one of the most forceful speakers, toured California speaking in favor of equal suffrage, telling of conditions with which she came in contact in her official duties and urging that women have a voice in regulating the hours of labor and conditions under which women and children work. Nor were the speakers confined to wom-

en, some of the very best men talent in the State have been making campaign speeches throughout the summer. The scope has been spread from the pulpit, through the press and at convention halls and homes.

Rev. Dr. Robert Burdette, speaking from a Baptist pulpit, took as his text Philippians 4:11, "Yea, I beseech thee, true yoke fellows, help these women," and made one of the strongest appeals for votes for women heard in the campaign. He declared that the whole sixteenth chapter of Romans was an indorsement of progressive women. His word picture of the mother in time of strife was the masterpiece reply to the anti-suffrage.

Other suffrage speakers of renown were Senator Lee C. Gates and Senator Leslie H. Hewell. The latter says emphatically: "No civic work does not make women masculine or aggressive, neither for individual preference, nor for the sake of the masculine career, and declared that in his twenty-years' experience he had never found women coming to ask councilmen or legislators to do something which means to her an individual gain. She comes asking changes

which will be for the betterment of a community and emphatically declares that the ballot's power will add to woman's dignity and charm. Senator Gates was one of the first speakers at the noon meetings held by votes for women clubs, an organization in Los Angeles which is being officered by Mrs. Clara Shortbridge Foltz, president, a prominent and successful lawyer of that city, and Miss Mary Foy, secretary. While political organizations of both men and women have been formed to work in all precincts, wards and counties for the vote for women the work of the federated clubs is by no means to be considered a small factor, and it is the claim of leaders in the West that it is not only the prophet, but the mere reader of events who foresees that as women's clubs began with the suffrage idea that their influence will be ultimately invoked in its cause, and cite you to the legislative committee of the Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs, a committee appointed by organized women of that State to watch legislation, which meets on Tuesday mornings in the State house, to examine every bill introduced into the legislature, whose power rests upon non-partisanship and is composed of about seventy-five women from clubs throughout the State, to justify their claim.